United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Stanislaus National Forest
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Subject: Evaluation of Dwarf Mistletoe at Soda Springs and Pumice Flat Campgrounds, Inyo National Forest

To: Files

On August 7, 1997, John Wenz and I visited Soda Springs and Pumice Flat Campgrounds on the Mammoth Ranger District, Inyo National Forest. Also present were Sandy Hogan, Tom Higley, Richard Perloff, Scott Kusumoto and Fred Richter. Fred was concerned about current mortality in the sites and maintaining tree health.

Soda Springs Campground contains 25 campsites and is vegetated primarily by a lodgepole pine overstory and a lodgepole/red fir understory. The north end of the campground is severly infested with lodgepole pine dwarf mistletoe. Overstory pines have Hawksworth ratings of 4 or more with heavy brooming and many dead or dying tops. Most understory lodgepole pines are also infected. Scattered annual mortality has occurred in the section of the facility for the past several years and appears a result of dwarf mistletoe and the mountain pine beetle.

This campground is in dire need of dwarf mistletoe control, which should have been done many years ago. Trying to eliminate most of the mistletoe would require removal of most of the overstory trees, which is not an acceptable option to the District. The best approach would be to remove witches' brooms from the lower crown of trees that still have live tops in order to increase their longevity. This would provide time needed for the District to try and improve the health of the undestory. Scattered red fir have seeded in naturally and appear healthy. Planting more red fir, which is resistant to lodgepole pine dwarf mistletoe, is a good option, but survival of planted fir on the Inyo has been poor. We also discussed the importance of watering seedlings for a few seasons after planting and protecting the seedlings from trampeling with barriers or fences.

Pumice Flat Campground contains 20 campsites and has a fairly dense overstory of lodgpole pine. One small group of dead pines had been killed by the mountaing pine beetle. One tree faded this year. Light lodgepole dwarf mistletoe infections were present at this location. We did not survey the entire campground to look for more mistletoe.

The District will consider surveying both of these campgrounds to further define the distribution and severity of dwarf mistletoe. These surveys could lead to requests for suppression funding.

John Pronos

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